

REMARKS

Claims 28-54 are pending in the present application. Claims 28 and 37 were amended in this response to correct minor informalities. No new matter was introduced as a result of the amendments. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 28-33, 37-42 and 45-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by *Meki et al.* (US Patent 6,041,066). Claims 34-36, 43-44 and 53-54 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Meki et al.* (US Patent 6,041,066) in view of *Wolf* (US Patent 5,886,996). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Specifically, the cited art, alone or in combination, fails to disclose the feature of “a converter in the at least one interface unit which converts the data describing the quality of the clock signal into messages, the format of the messages being independent of a format of the data transmitted, and which transmits the messages to the device for assessment” as recited in independent claim 28 and similarly recited in independent claims 37 and 47. As was explained in previous responses, under the recited claims, the clock signal quality is processed according to a single algorithm in the system, where conventional differentiation between the interface type is no longer required.

In contrast, *Meki* discloses a method of processing SONET synchronization status messages (SSM) in which a synchronization status message, indicating the best quality level, is inserted to a main signal. A clock is extracted from the main signal and is adopted as a master clock for use in signal processing and synchronization (col. 1, lines 2-12). The disclosure in *Meki* is solely directed to SONET networks (col. 1, lines 15-26), and is aimed at solving problems specifically found in SONET systems:

Though the sending and receiving of synchronization status messages in a one-shelf/one transmission apparatus arrangement is stipulated by the SONET standard, there is no stipulation concerning the processing of synchronization status messages in an arrangement in which one transmission apparatus is composed of a plurality of shelves. Such processing needs to be stipulated (col. 2, lines 56-63).

Moreover, the entire disclosure of *Meki* only speaks of SONET networks (see, e.g., FIG. 5, 15, and supporting text). The assertion that the “Sync Msg” signal is “converted” into an independent format is simply incorrect. The Sync Msg of *Meki* is always a part of the SONET

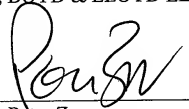
format, and is communicated between the Master and Slave Shelf (col. 7, lines 22-32). For synchronizing a network, *Meki* merely states, in the Background, that “[Sync Msg] is sent and received using the overhead (S1 byte) of the SONET signal or the data link of an ESF DS1 signal” (col. 1, lines 55-56). There is nothing in this sentence that teaches or suggests that a “conversion” takes place, but merely describes the medium in which the Sync Msg signal is transmitted. Thus, *Meki* fails to teach or suggest a converter that converts the data describing the quality of the clock signal into messages, the format of the messages being independent of a format of the data transmitted, and which transmits the messages to the device for assessment

Furthermore, with specific regard to claims 28 and 37, the converting occurs before the quality of the clock signal is assessed. *Meki* clearly fails to show such a configuration. *Wolf* also fails to solve the deficiencies of *Meki*, described above.

In light of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 and 103 are improper and should be withdrawn. Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If any additional fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Examiner is authorized to deduct such fees from deposit account no. 02-1818. If such a deduction is made, please indicate the attorney docket no. (0112740-184) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

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